



LIFE IN THE ER

Air Force medics get hands-on training in the big city

Story and photos by Master Sgt. Gary R. Coppage

When Tech. Sgt. Matthew Walters treated a 24-year-old man who'd been shot in the chest he said "It was the highlight of the night!"

As a medic-in-training in the Center for Sustainment of Trauma and Readiness Skills program, in Baltimore, Md., the independent duty medical technician for special operations command is among a group of Air Force doctors, nurses, technicians and anesthetists getting real-life trauma training in the big city.

For three-weeks, the medics turn in their blue uniforms and join the R. Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center team. The program gives Air Force medics valuable hands-on clinical experience. From responding to a 911 call to the scrubbing for the operating room, this real-world training sharpens the skills needed to save lives on the battlefield.

After successfully stabilizing a gunshot victim, Tech. Sgt. Matthew Walters (center), an Air Force Special Operations Command medic, and Neil Holmes rush him to the emergency room of Johns Hopkins Hospital for further treatment. Sergeant Walters is gaining valuable hands-on training during a three-week program in Baltimore, Md. His patient survived.



Senior Airman Heather Green-Bishop (far left) ties the knot on a triangle bandage to support Curtis Shipman's arm after he took a bad fall while skating. Airman Green-Bishop, from Fairchild Air Force Base, Wash., said riding with the medical services ambulances is one of the highlights of the trauma and readiness skills program. A patient's vital signs are displayed on monitors (left) mounted on the walls of the operating room at the Shock Trauma Center. Col. Thomas E. Grissom (below), an anesthesiologist and program director, rushes a patient with internal bleeding to surgery. The colonel is part of a Shock Trauma team that determines the extent of injuries when victims arrive at the hospital.



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The trauma team (far left) at the R. Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center stabilizes a man after he lost control of his car, crashed into a tree and was airlifted to the hospital. Staff Sgt. Christine Vogt, Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., holds the man's head and Airman 1st Class Lindsey Kunz, Keesler Air Force Base, Miss., holds his leg as the team removes him from a backboard. From the trauma room to the operating room, Sergeant Vogt (left) assists with a surgery. The goal of this hands-on training is to produce "ready medics" for today's medical service corps. The experience sharpens their skills and develops confidence — skills needed for the battlefield. The aftermath of treatment in a trauma room (below) is evident. The patient in this room suffered from internal bleeding after being hit head-on by a drunk driver. She was rushed into surgery.



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